

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 7 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 4 - 7 have been amended. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated January 16, 2004.

Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication in item 9 of the Office that claims 1 – 3 have been allowed

Applicants also gratefully acknowledge the indication in item 12 of the Office Action that claims 4 - 7 would be allowable, if amended, to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as well as to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

However, for at least the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims 1 – 7 are allowable.

Drawings:

The drawings stand objected to in items 1 - 3 of the Action due to minor informalities. More specifically, in item 1 of the Action, the drawings are objected to since the elements in the drawings are labeled in Japanese. However, replacements sheets are included for all Figs. 1 – 29, in which all of the elements in the drawings are now in referenced in English.

In item 2 of the Action, the drawings are objected to since element (2), image processing device, of Fig. 1 is mentioned in the subtitle but not shown in Fig. 1. However, it is respectfully submitted that Fig. 1 has been amended to include the subtitle for element (2) image processing device.

In item 3 of the Action, the drawings are objected to since the subtitle to Fig. 8, “Case of non-white/black-permuted” should have been “Case of white/black-permuted.” However, Fig. 8 has been amended to correctly recite “Case of white/black-permuted” as suggested by the Examiner.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph Rejection:

Claims 4 - 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Each of claims 4 - 7 has been amended to overcome this rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicant submits that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date.

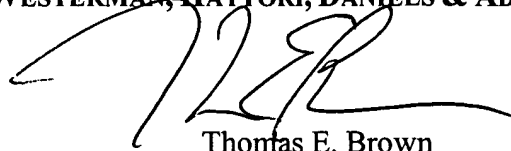
If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.111
Attorney Docket No. 000555
Serial No. 09/777,870

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TEB', is written over the firm name.

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Attachment: Replacement Sheets – Figures 1 - 29
Change of Correspondence Address